

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2001 Iowa Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed by the Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The SCORP attempts to provide a comprehensive look at outdoor recreation in the State of Iowa in an easy-to-use format.

Several topics are examined in the 2001 Iowa SCORP including: Iowa's outdoor recreation users, Iowa's outdoor recreation supply and opportunities, outdoor recreation issues and priorities, surveys on public attitudes towards outdoor recreation, agencies that provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and grants and other programs related to outdoor recreation in Iowa.

Outdoor recreation has numerous benefits for both the public and the environment. Recreation areas provide the public with places to gather with family and friends, places to relax, and places that promote physical activity. These types of places add to an area's and person's quality of life. Recreation areas also help to shape a community through planning efforts to provide adequate recreation space and facilities for the population served. Parks

and open spaces can also provide environmental benefits such as buffers between conflicting land uses.

During the creation of this document, a SCORP Committee was formed to identify statewide outdoor recreation issues and develop priorities to address these issues. The Committee consisted of a wide variety of individuals and organizations with ties to outdoor recreation. The issues and priorities are outlined in the 2001 Iowa SCORP as well as in the OPSP, Open Project Selection Process, which is attached as a supplement. The 2001 Iowa SCORP and the OPSP should be consulted by those making application through outdoor recreation grant programs.

The DNR understands the importance of forming partnerships when addressing outdoor recreation in the State of Iowa. This plan attempts to present information that will be useful to outdoor recreation providers and users. Efforts between public, private, federal, state and local agencies are necessary to meet the outdoor recreation needs of the citizens of Iowa. Continued partnerships between these agencies and the public will ensure Iowans will have access to high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities today and in the future.

Introduction

2001 Iowa SCORP

An outline map of the state of Iowa is positioned behind the text "2001 Iowa SCORP". The map shows the state's characteristic rectangular shape with its irregular, wavy borders.

ABOUT THE 2001 IOWA SCORP

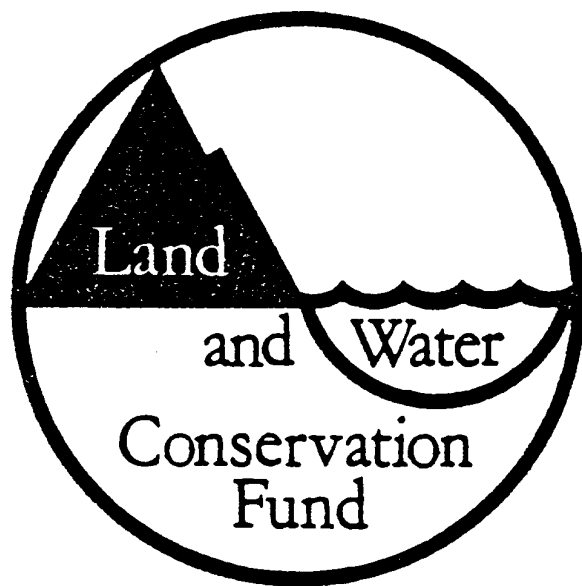
The 2001 SCORP, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, is the seventh edition of the plan. The 2001 SCORP is a comprehensive yet compact evaluation of outdoor recreation in the State of Iowa. Efforts were taken to ensure the plan was developed through public, private and other outside input. This effort included the formation of the 2001 SCORP Committee. The Committee was made up of various persons representing a wide range of outdoor recreation interests, concerns, and backgrounds. The Committee provided input in identifying outdoor recreation issues, developing priorities that should be considered when planning future outdoor recreation opportunities, and assisted with the overall review of the plan. Other outside input included numerous public meetings including REAP, Resource Enhancement and Protection assemblies, Destination Parks Meetings, and two surveys that were conducted in conjunction with the development of this plan. Further information was gained through a statewide inventory of all public outdoor recreation areas in the state.

The SCORP is a direct result of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Congress created the LWCF in 1965 to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness, wetlands, and refuges, preserve habitat and enhance recreational opportunities. Since its initiation, the LWCF has provided nearly \$46 million in matching grants to the State of Iowa and its cities and counties. Over 1,000 parks and open spaces in the State of Iowa have benefited from the Fund. From 1996 to 1999, no money was available through the LWCF however; a small amount of funding was available in 2000. Optimism remains high that a higher level of funding will be available in the following years. Several bills remain in debate in Congress that could have positive effects on the LWCF.

The need to provide Iowans with quality outdoor recreation opportunities remains very high. There are several factors contributing to the demand for outdoor recreation. The rapid expansion of urban areas puts great stress on nearby existing areas and often reduces the amount of land available for park and recreation developments. The continual increase in the use of existing parks and recreation areas is evidence that there is great demand for outdoor recreation opportunities. Further evidence lies in the ever changing outdoor recreation habits as activities such as soccer, skating and off-road vehicle riding become increasingly popular. Each year

the amount of funding requested for recreational programs increases while the amount available decreases, leaving many recreational needs unfilled. In 2000, the State of Iowa had \$248,500 available through the LWCF but had over \$2 million in requests. Also in 2000, the State of Iowa had \$3 million available through the Recreation Infrastructure Grant Program but had over \$5.3 million in requests.

Iowa's park system has been evolving for the last 80 years. So too have the social and economic factors affecting people's leisure time. Over those years the public has continued to express its desire and increasing demand for outdoor recreation services and facilities that are provided by both the private and public sectors.



PURPOSE OF THE 2001 IOWA SCORP

The SCORP's primary functions are to assess the supply of and the demand for outdoor recreation resources and to help define priorities for actions on the part of all sectors to meet identified needs. Outdoor recreation means many different things to many different people. With that in mind, it is vital that this plan does not exclude any current or future user groups. City, county, state and federal governments as well as the private sector, all play active roles in meeting public demands for recreation services and facilities.

The 2001 SCORP has three main goals:

1. To serve as a guide to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and local and private agencies in protecting and enhancing the state's natural outdoor recreational resources.
2. To identify outdoor recreation issues and priorities that will be incorporated in the local outdoor recreation grant programs administered by the DNR.
3. To use input and research from public and private groups, and information obtained from a statewide inventory of outdoor recreation facilities in the state, to assist local, state, federal, and private agencies in evaluating their outdoor recreation needs and opportunities.

This year's SCORP has been approached differently than in the past. The idea is to provide a more usable plan that focuses its attention mainly, but not exclusively, on the recreational opportunities that the DNR provides. The DNR administers several recreation related grant programs; how each applicant's proposed project relates to the SCORP priorities is a very important factor, among other program specific criteria, when determining funding.

Iowa's Outdoor Recreation Users

2001 Iowa SCORP

An outline map of the state of Iowa is positioned behind the text "2001 Iowa SCORP". The map is a simple black line drawing showing the state's irregular borders.

In order to better provide recreational opportunities in the State of Iowa it is essential to understand who the users are. There are a number of surveys and studies that have been completed that provide information helpful towards this understanding. These surveys and studies are detailed on pages 20-32 of this document. Another key to understanding the users and future users of Iowa's recreation areas is to understand the population makeup of the state. Certainly non-state residents also visit Iowa's recreation areas, however, studies conducted during the summer of 2000 reported that 90 percent of visitors to Iowa's State Parks are Iowa residents while 70 percent of Iowa residents vacation in Iowa. Therefore understanding Iowa's population makeup is an essential piece of information when providing recreational opportunities in the State of Iowa.

Census Data



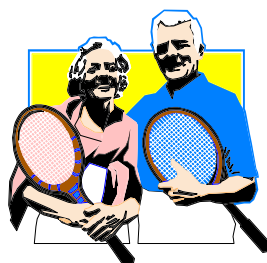
As of the date of publication of this document, only the 2000 state's population results were available from the 2000 Census data. Because of this, estimates will have to be used for the majority of this section.

Iowa's population grew 5.5% between 1990 and 2000 from 2,776,755 to 2,926,324. This is slightly higher than what the estimates had projected. When comparing Iowa's population growth with the seven states that border Iowa, Iowa has the lowest percentage increase. The next closest to Iowa is Nebraska with an increase of 8.4% while Minnesota had the largest increase between 1990 and 2000 at 12.4 percent. Iowa and all states bordering Iowa had increases that were 1.4% to 3.2% higher than what estimates projected. Due to this fact, there is some concern that under estimations may occur with other data as well.

Estimates compiled in 1999 by the U.S. Census Bureau show that births have exceeded deaths in Iowa by a diminishing rate since the early 1980s. This helps to explain the relatively small growth rate. In addition, during the past several decades, Iowa has experienced negative net migration, meaning more people have left Iowa than entered. This was particularly the case in the 1980s when there was a negative migration of 280,000 residents. According to 1999 estimates, this trend has reversed during the 1990s with an expected net migration of 5,600 residents into the state. It is important to understand where the 5,600 new residents to move to Iowa

came from. Examining that closer, it is estimated that 15,500 more residents of Iowa moved to other states than residents from other states moving to Iowa. Iowa was, however, estimated to have experienced a positive net international migration of 21,100. This shows that Iowa's minority population is increasing and is an important factor to consider when planning future outdoor recreation opportunities.

Another factor that has an effect on Iowa's population is urbanization. Urban is defined as those living in incorporated places with a population of at least 2,500. Each decade has seen an increase in the total percentage of the Iowa population living in urban areas. In 1970, 57.2% of the population lived in urban areas. In 1980, that figure was up to 58.6% and in 1990 it rose again to 60.6%. That trend is expected to continue in 2000.



The age makeup of the population is also a very important factor to examine. Iowa's median age continues to increase with each census. In 1980 Iowa's median age was 30, in 1990 it was 34; it is estimated to be 36.9 in 1999 and

projected to be 38 in 2010 and 40.8 in 2020. It is very obvious that Iowa's population continues to age. Another statistic to illustrate this is the number of persons in the state under the age of 5 compared to the number of persons over the age of 75. In 1990, the number of persons over the age of 75 surpassed the number of persons under the age of 5 for the first time since census data has been collected. Florida was the only other state where this had occurred. This has occurred as a result of the steady increase in persons over 75 and the steady decrease, except for the baby boom decades, of persons under the age of 5. There was also a large percentage decrease of persons under the age of 30 from 1980 to 1990. In 1980, 50% of Iowa's population was under the age of 30; this percentage had shrunk to 43.6% by 1990, and is estimated to be 40.9% of Iowa's total population in 2000.

For total population, Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., Washington D.C., project that Iowa will return to slow but steady gains in the coming decades, a pattern similar to what occurred throughout much of the current century.

In reviewing all information presented, the following trends and implications are projected:

- Iowa's population to have a percentage increase in minority population.

Persons raised in other cultures will bring new outdoor recreation pursuits that previously may not have been in demand in Iowa.

- An increase in the number of Iowans living in urban settings and a decrease in the number of Iowans living in rural areas.

Demand for recreation opportunities "close to home" will continue to increase.

Surveys consistently show that urban dwellers participate more frequently in outdoor recreation pursuits than do rural residents.

Demand for development on lands adjacent to or near urban areas often leads to pricing of property to the point where cost is prohibitive for development of recreational purposes.

- A continual aging of the population characterized by an increase in persons over the age of 75 and a decrease in persons under the age of 30.

Recreation opportunities must be made available to meet the needs for more passive leisure time opportunities.

Opportunities for persons with disabilities will most likely need to increase.

Many feel that more recreational opportunities aimed at the younger segment of the population will add incentives for those to remain in the state.

Iowa's population as aging. With this in mind, the fact remains that outdoor recreational opportunities for children is a very important factor to address and playgrounds can provide multiple benefits to children.

Playgrounds are a fundamental part of the childhood experience. Playgrounds should provide opportunities where children can stretch their physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills. Community playgrounds play an increasingly important role in children's' lives. The goal of every play area is to provide a challenging yet safe play environment. Many factors contribute to the success in finding the correct balance. These factors include age appropriate design (separate play structures are recommended for ages 2-5 and ages 5-12 with signage designated as such), type and depth of playground surfacing, level of equipment maintenance and type of supervision. Current existing public playgrounds and surfacing should be evaluated for compliance with the 'Handbook for Public Playground Safety' from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The CPSC created its playground safety guidelines as a detailed working blueprint to help local communities, schools, parks and other groups to build safe playgrounds.

The National Program for Playground Safety recently evaluated playgrounds in all 50 states and graded them. Public parks in Iowa received a C- as an overall grade based on these factors: supervision - C+, age-appropriate design - C+, fall surfacing - C- and equipment maintenance - D-. More than 20,000 children are treated in US hospital emergency rooms each year for injuries associated with playground equipment. Iowa needs to improve our commitment to safe play environments.

Children and Playgrounds

As discussed previously, Census data continues to show

Planning Process

2001 Iowa SCORP

An outline map of the state of Iowa is positioned behind the text "2001 Iowa SCORP". The map shows the state's irregular borders, including its northern, southern, and eastern edges.

SCORP COMMITTEE



A volunteer committee was formed by soliciting over 40 agencies and organizations, asking for a representative to serve on the SCORP Committee.

Great effort was made to gather a wide variety of individuals and organizations with ties to outdoor recreation issues. Altogether, over 25 individuals became involved with the SCORP Committee during the process either by attending one of the two scheduled meetings, or by providing outside input and resources. Diverse representation was achieved with persons from local and state public agencies and private not-for-profit agencies serving on the committee. A list of all agencies and organizations solicited to participate in the SCORP Committee can be found on page 16.

The SCORP Committee had three identified main duties which were as follows:

- Assist in identifying outdoor recreation issues in Iowa.
- Assist in developing priorities that should be considered when planning future outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Assist in reviewing the 2001 Iowa SCORP.

There were two SCORP Committee meetings held. The first meeting served as an introduction to the SCORP process. The requirements of the SCORP document and the major goals outlining the 2001 Iowa SCORP were presented as well as discussion of the role of the SCORP Committee. A large part of the meeting was devoted to open discussion related to outdoor recreation in Iowa. This was done in order to give the members an opportunity to speak on what they feel are issues important to outdoor recreation in Iowa. This also allowed others to hear ideas that they may not have thought of previously. When the meeting adjourned, the committee members were then given the assignment to list issues affecting outdoor recreation in the State of Iowa.

In the following weeks, the issues and priorities that were submitted by the SCORP Committee were compiled and organized into like categories. The submitted informa-

tion was then sent back to the committee members so that they could review and familiarize themselves with the list. The members were asked to consider all issues and priorities and to begin to think about what they feel should receive the highest priority.

The second SCORP Committee meeting was held in order to prioritize the list of issues and priorities which were submitted by the committee. A facilitator from the Iowa Department of Economic Development was asked to assist with the meeting activities. The issues and priorities were displayed and the committee members were given the opportunity to revise the list and also make statements about the list. An exercise was then done in order to prioritize the list.

Issues and Priorities Facing Outdoor Recreation in Iowa

When planning for the future in outdoor recreation, it becomes necessary to identify issues and priorities facing outdoor recreation in Iowa. Considering the wide array of interests in outdoor recreation, what is an issue or priority to one group may be of little concern to another. The SCORP Committee was formed with the intention of bringing together into one group, a very diverse committee of persons with a strong interest in outdoor recreation, representing every spectrum of outdoor recreation possible.

The committee identified an extensive list of issues and priorities that were divided into like subject areas. The result was eleven general areas where the committee felt priorities should focus most strongly on in outdoor recreation. The following is a list of the eleven general areas in order of priority as determined by the SCORP Committee.

Protection
Partnerships
Education
Funding
Land Acquisition
Facilities
Marketing
Shared Resources
Trends
Analysis
Safety and Persons with Disabilities
Accessibility



The following is a list of specific outdoor recreation issues that should be given special attention as developed by the SCORP Committee. The committee studied all issues and priorities submitted by members of their group and were given a limited number of “votes” from which they chose what areas of outdoor recreation need special consideration. The top twelve choices follow in no particular order:

- Better marketing of outdoor recreational opportunities using the latest technologies, i.e. Internet, E-mail, and media. Market events and festivals too. Tie recreational opportunities with other attractions and facilities and promote these cooperatively to attract visitors, both in state and out of state.
- Develop partnerships between various agencies, special interest groups and government organizations, state and local, to best preserve and promote outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Educate all ages, with an emphasis on the young, in outdoor skills and stewardship ethics.
- Educate public and policy makers, (i.e. Iowa Legislature) on the importance of outdoor recreation.
- Seek additional funding and coordinate with the Iowa League of Cities, Iowa State Association of Counties, Iowa Parks and Recreation Association, Council of Governments and other groups to inform local governments of what funding is available.
- Iowa should acquire more lands and waters representative of various ecological communities and landforms throughout the state, and manage these areas carefully as nature preserves to be left in their present state, studied and appreciated by present and future generations. These areas should have maximum protection from all competing land uses as well as protection from destructive and consumptive forms of recreation.
- Recreational developments should be appropriate uses of the particular land area and should incorporate the needs of protecting sensitive natural areas.
- Need to define and preserve areas to remain primitive, areas that are resources to the state, nation and world. Expand and buffer parks. Protect representative landscapes in each landform region.

- Focus on education of Iowans in order to increase the awareness and the appreciation of our natural resources. This includes every day citizens and professionals in recreation and land management.
- Need to renovate and maintain existing facilities to ensure there is equal access for all users (persons with disabilities) and ensure that all new projects will provide equal access. Need to focus not only on new developments, but minimizing the deterioration of existing facilities and ADA compliance of existing facilities.
- Future recreational opportunities should focus on attracting all ages of people to Iowa and promote improving the health and wellness of Iowa. Broaden focus to accommodate new trends in recreation, i.e. paintball areas, rollerblading, skateboarding, ATVs, etc.
- The role of private lands for recreation is an area that could be expanded upon.

List of Agencies and Organizations Solicited for the SCORP Committee

- Iowa County Conservation Boards
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Rock Island District
 - Kansas City District
 - Omaha District
 - St. Paul District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Park Service
 - Midwest Region
- Iowa Department of Agriculture
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
 - Division of Tourism
 - Division of Rural and Community Development
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa Recreation and Parks Association
- Loess Hills Preservation Society
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Sierra Club
- Ducks Unlimited
- Pheasants Forever
- Iowa Wild Turkey Foundation
- The Golf Office
- Iowa Department of Elder Affairs
- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
- Iowa State Historical Society
- Iowa Off Highway Vehicle Association
- Iowa Snowmobile Association
- Iowa League of Cities
- Mahaska Community Recreation Foundation
- Missouri Fox Trotters
- Central Iowa Tourism Association
- Eastern Iowa Tourism Association
- Western Iowa Tourism Region
- Iowa Audubon Council
- Iowa Conservation Education Council
- Iowa Prairie Network
- Iowa Wildlife Federation
- Iowa Environmental Council
- Volkspoint Association
- Iowa Department of Human Rights
- Iowa State Association of Counties
- League of Iowa Bicyclists
- Iowa Trails Council